

In the claims:

Claims 1-4 cancelled.

5. (currently amended) A process for flavoring raw unpopped kernels, comprising the steps of introducing in a container water and sodium chloride to obtain a hypersaturated brine; introducing raw unpopped corn kernels into the hypersaturated brine accommodated in the container for swelling the corn kernels; keeping the unpopped corn kernels in the brine for until the corn kernels absorb the brine and swell; taking the swollen unpopped corn kernels that have absorbed the brine from the container and drying the unpopped corn kernels until they recover their original moisture level; ~~incorporating an additional food flavor during the drying of the corn kernels;~~ and subjecting the dried unpopped corn kernels that have absorbed the brine to a surface coating with a fixing agent for food ~~to prevent a loss from the unpopped corn kernels of the food flavor incorporated earlier during drying of the corn kernels.~~

6. (previously presented) A process for flavoring raw unpopped corn kernels as defined in Claim 5, wherein said keeping the unpopped corn kernels in the brine includes keeping the unpopped corn kernels within a time between 8 and 20 hours at room temperature and under atmospheric pressure.

7. (previously presented) A process for flavoring raw unpopped corn kernels as defined in Claim 5, wherein said drying includes drying by spreading the unpopped corn kernels on perforated trays and applying hot air for a time substantially 1-2 hours.

8. (currently amended) A process for flavoring raw unpopped corn kernels as defined in Claim 5, further comprising subjecting a mixture of the water and the sodium chloride to a ~~steering~~stirring step to facilitate obtaining of the brine.

9. (previously presented) A process for flavoring raw unpopped corn kernels as defined in Claim 5, wherein said keeping the unpopped corn kernels in the brine includes keeping the unpopped corn kernels in the brine under pressure.

10. (previously presented) A process for flavoring raw unpopped corn kernels as define in Claim 5, wherein said keeping the unpopped corn kernels in the brine includes keeping the unpopped corn kernels in the brine at a temperature substantially higher than room temperature.

11. (previously presented) A process of flavoring raw unpopped corn kernels as defined in Claim 5, wherein said keeping the unpopped corn kernels in the brine includes keeping the unpopped corn

kernels in the brine under pressure and at a temperature substantially higher than room temperature.

12. (previously presented) A process of flavoring raw unpopped corn kernels as defined in Claim 5, wherein said subjecting includes subjecting the unpopped corn kernels to a surface coating with a fixing agent which does not contain a food flavor.

13. (previously presented) A process of flavoring raw unpopped corn kernels as defined in Claim 5, wherein said subjecting includes subjecting the unpopped corn kernels to a surface coating with a fixing agent which includes a food flavor.

14. (previously presented) A process of flavoring raw unpopped corn kernels as defined in Claim 5, and further comprising using as the fixing agent food-grade shellac and a flavoring agent.

15. (currently amended) A process for flavoring raw unpopped kernels, comprising the steps of introducing in a container water and sodium chloride to obtain a hypersaturated brine; introducing raw unpopped corn kernels into the hypersaturated brine accommodated in the container for swelling the corn kernels; keeping the unpopped corn kernels in the brine for until the corn kernels absorb the brine and swell;

taking the swollen unpopped corn kernels that have absorbed the brine from the container and drying the unpopped corn kernels until they recover their original moisture level; incorporating an additional food flavor during the step selected from the group consisting of the drying of the corn kernels and the swelling of the corn kernels that have absorbed the brine; and subjecting the dried unpopped corn kernels to a surface coating with a fixing agent for food to prevent a loss from the unpopped corn kernels of the food flavor incorporated earlier ~~during the swelling of the corn kernels.~~

16. (new) A process for flavoring raw unpopped kernels, comprising the steps of introducing in a container water and sodium chloride to obtain a hypersaturated brine; introducing raw unpopped corn kernels into the hypersaturated brine accommodated in the container for swelling the corn kernels; keeping the unpopped corn kernels in the brine for until the corn kernels absorb the brine inside the unpopped corn kernels and swell; taking the swollen unpopped corn kernels that have absorbed the brine from the container and drying the unpopped corn kernels until they recover their original moisture level; and subjecting the dried unpopped corn kernels that have absorbed the brine to a surface coating outside the dried unpopped corn kernels with a fixing agent for food.

REMARKS